



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

*Ophiopogon japonicus*¹

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Introduction

Mondo Grass has many attributes which continue to make it a popular groundcover (Fig. 1). The dark green, six to 8-inch-tall, grasslike mounds are comprised of amazingly sturdy plants, tolerating full sun (except in the Deep South) to deep shade, drought or periods of standing water, an ability to tolerate some foot traffic, and a seeming immunity to most insect pests or diseases.

General Information

Scientific name: *Ophiopogon japonicus*

Pronunciation: oh-fee-oh-POE-gawn juh-PAWN-nick-kuss

Common name(s): Mondo Grass, Dwarf Lilyturf

Family: *Liliaceae*

Plant type: perennial; herbaceous; ornamental grass

USDA hardiness zones: 7 through 11 (Fig. 2)

Planting month for zone 7: year round

Planting month for zone 8: year round

Planting month for zone 9: year round

Planting month for zone 10 and 11: year round

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: mass planting; edging

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

Description

Height: .3 to .7 feet

Spread: depends upon supporting structure

Plant habit: spreading

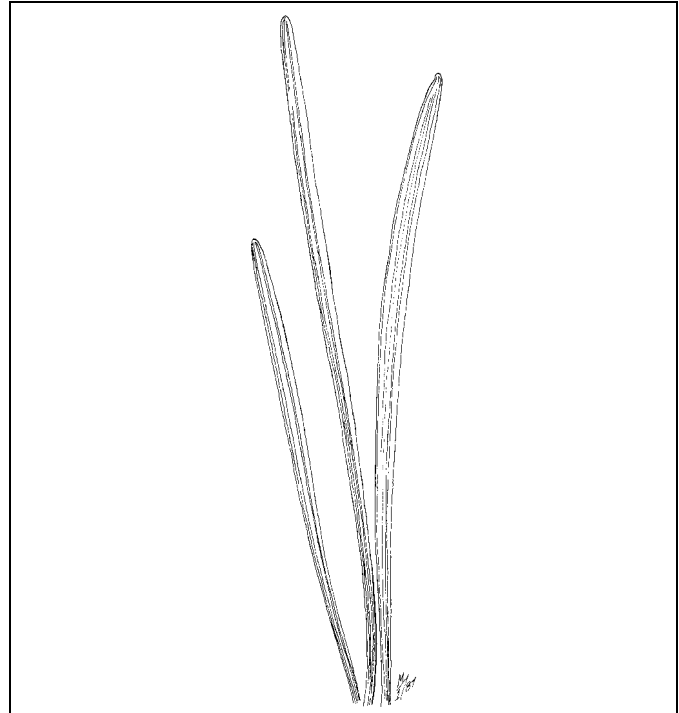


Figure 1. Mondo Grass.

Plant density: dense

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: most emerge from the soil, usually without a stem

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire
Leaf shape: linear
Leaf venation: parallel
Leaf type and persistence: evergreen
Leaf blade length: 8 to 12 inches
Leaf color: variegated
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: white
Flower characteristic: summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: unknown
Fruit length: unknown
Fruit cover: unknown
Fruit color: brown
Fruit characteristic: inconspicuous and not showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: not applicable
Current year stem/twig color: not applicable
Current year stem/twig thickness: not applicable

Culture

Light requirement: plant grows in the shade
Soil tolerances: acidic; slightly alkaline; clay; sand; loam
Drought tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerances: unknown
Plant spacing: 6 to 12 inches

Other

Roots: not applicable
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding plant: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: aggressive, spreading plant
Pest resistance: no serious pests are normally seen on the plant

Use and Management

Often used as an edging or border grass, Mondo Grass is quite useful as a groundcover where its creeping underground stems quickly provide a rich green carpet. It contrasts well with Gardenia, Hydrangea, and other light to medium-green shrubs. As an alternative to lawn grasses, Mondo Grass can fill in problem areas of exposed tree roots or sloping hillsides that are difficult to mow and are subject to soil erosion. The evergreen foliage maintains its neat appearance reportedly to a temperature of 0-degrees F. Plant on six to 10-inch centers for quick establishment. Mondo Grass can be mowed in late winter, before growth begins, to eliminate old, discolored foliage.

Available cultivars include: 'Gyokuruu', dark green grass-like foliage, two inches tall; 'Nana', compact, slow-growing, four to five inches tall; 'Shiroshima Ryu', dark green and white striped leaves, three to four inches tall; and 'Variegatus', green and white striped leaves.

Propagation is by division of the matted clumps. Simply dig some up, cut it apart and plant small clumps in new areas.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.